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Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia

I. Introduction

1. The present report, which is submitted pursuant to paragraph 55 of Security Council resolution 2372 (2017) and paragraph 28 of resolution 2408 (2018), provides information about the implementation of both resolutions, including with regard to the mandates of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). The report covers major developments in Somalia from 21 December 2017 to 24 April 2018.

II. Political, security and economic overview

A. Political developments

2. The reporting period was dominated by a political crisis resulting from a no-confidence motion against the Speaker of the House of the People (lower house), which created tensions between the executive branch and the Federal Parliament, sharply divided parliamentarians and slowed federal legislative activity and efforts to act on other political priorities. The crisis also led to the mobilization of Somali security forces and irregular forces and to a renewal of inter-clan tensions, thereby increasing the risk of an armed confrontation in Mogadishu.

3. As the Federal Parliament returned from its four-month recess, a motion of no confidence was filed against the Speaker of the House of the People, Mohamed Osman Jawari, on 14 March. That triggered a sharp rise in political tensions that had been building up since attempts by the Federal Government to arrest and remove sitting parliamentarians in 2017. The campaign against the Speaker resulted in a deadlock between two groups of parliamentarians, amid allegations that the motion was orchestrated by the leadership of the Federal Government to pre-empt a plan by opposition parliamentarians to unseat the Prime Minister, Hassan Ali Khaire. Mediation efforts, including through an ad hoc, seven-member committee in the Upper House, failed to resolve the crisis. Militias said to be aligned with the two opposing sides were reportedly mobilized in the city throughout the crisis. On 8 April, Mr. Jawari resigned as Speaker, stating his desire to avoid further escalation.

4. The crisis distracted the Federal Government and the federal member states from carrying out preparatory work for the elections due to be held in 2020–2021, deepening federalism, reforming the security sector and moving the constitutional review process forward. The National Security Council, made up of leaders of the

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Federal Government and federal member states, met from 6 to 10 February in order to reach agreement on financial and operational support for the regional forces, which would be integrated into the state police force. They also agreed to form a technical committee to develop proposals on power-sharing, resource management, allocation of revenues and an electoral model, to be considered at the next meeting of the Council, on 28 March in Baidoa. However, that meeting was postponed indefinitely, owing to the political stalemate in Mogadishu.

5. The President of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo, conducted a visit from 7 to 24 January to Puntland and Galmudug, his first to those states, where he received a warm reception. To show his personal commitment to local reconciliation efforts between the two states, the President travelled by road from Garoowe to Gaalkacyo.

6. During his visit, the President attended a ceremony in Dhuusamarreeb on 18 January to mark the formation of a united Galmudug administration, the result of a power-sharing agreement between the Galmudug Interim Administration and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a, which the two parties signed in Mogadishu on 6 December 2017. The transfer of government functions from Cadaado to the constitutional state capital of Dhuusamarreeb has started. Preparations are under way to form a committee to work out the modalities for integrating members of Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a into the Galmudug regional forces. A committee established in February to amalgamate the two constitutions presented a draft harmonized constitution that is pending the approval of the state assembly. However, on 11 April, an unresolved dispute over the number of seats in a united state assembly and their distribution by clan prompted the Saleebaan traditional and community leaders based in Cadaado to declare their withdrawal from Galmudug.

7. In South-West State, the process of forming a district council continued. The Berdaale district council, which includes two female members, was inaugurated on 24 January. In Baidoa, neither of the two bodies responsible for managing the process of forming a district council has been set up. The lack of transparency has increased inter-clan tensions over power-sharing in Baidoa. In Baraawe, inter-communal differences over the allocation of seats have held up the formal launch of its district council formation process.

8. On 21 January, the President removed the then Governor of Banadir and Mayor of Mogadishu, Thabit Abdi Mohamed. That decision followed tensions that had arisen between him and the Federal Government over the selling or allocation of public lands in Mogadishu, responsibility for security in the capital and the status of Banadir and Mogadishu. The Minister of Information, Abdirahman Omar Osman "Yarisow", was appointed as the new Mayor.

9. Tensions flared up between "Somaliland" and Puntland during the reporting period. On 8 January, "Somaliland" forces took control of Tukaraq in the disputed Sool region, ejecting Puntland security and customs personnel. The move came shortly after the visit by a federal minister to Badhan in the disputed Sanaag region and the visit by the President of Somalia to Garoowe a day before. "Somaliland" has declared its intention to increase development support for Tukaraq and maintain its security presence. The President of Puntland, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali "Gaas", is under local political pressure to respond. Meanwhile, pro-"Somaliland" officials of Khatumo State are demanding that the new administration of the latter expedite the implementation of the peace agreement that it signed with "Somaliland" in October 2017.

10. On 1 March, "Somaliland" signed a tripartite agreement with Ethiopia and a private company based in Dubai on the management of Berbera port. The lower house of the Federal Parliament subsequently declared the agreement null and void and

banned the company from operating in Somalia, a move that has been rejected by "Somaliland". On 14 March, the President of "Somaliland" met the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi. They agreed that the United Arab Emirates would support training of "Somaliland" security forces and that the construction of the military airbase and naval base in Berbera would proceed as planned.

B. Security developments

11. The overall security situation remains volatile. In Mogadishu, following a brief lull in January, when mostly small improvised explosive device attacks and targeted assassinations were reported, an estimated 18 people died and 20 were injured on 23 February in twin suicide car bombings. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attacks, which bore the hallmarks of that group's method over the past two years of carrying out smaller attacks followed by a larger assault. In addition, the arrest of government officials by the Somali security forces in Mogadishu has resulted in clan protests and demonstrations. The number of targeted assassinations claimed by Al-Shabaab continued to increase.

12. On 2 March, Al-Shabaab carried out three separate complex attacks on the outskirts of Mogadishu. A Somali national army training camp was targeted in Afgooye, Shabelle Hoose, 25 km north-west of Mogadishu. A second attack occurred in Balcad, 30 km north of Mogadishu in Shabelle Dhexe. The third attack was also carried out near Balcad, targeting a convoy of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) escorted by 75 Burundian troops.

13. In Puntland, Al-Shabaab attacks on Somali security forces continued in and near Boosaaso and the Galgalo mountains. On 7 February, two civilians were killed and four police officers injured in an improvised explosive device and complex attack by Al-Shabaab in Boosaaso at a police station near the port. Al-Shabaab and pro-Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) elements were killed in air strikes in February. Clashes between pro-ISIL fighters and the Somali security forces and local militias have also been reported. The latest incident occurred on 24 February in the Dacar area.

14. Air strikes, including by the United States Air Force, have become an integral component of the offensive against Al-Shabaab strongholds and hideouts in southern and central Somalia and Jubaland and against pro-ISIL elements and Al-Shabaab in Puntland. The air strikes were concentrated in southerly central and southern regions, largely owing to the high level of Al-Shabaab activity there. Twenty air strikes were carried out in the first quarter of 2018, compared with none in the same period in 2017. Since April 2017, air strikes have continued unabated and increased in number; 24 such strikes were carried out in the last quarter of 2017.

15. Clan violence continued. In Sanaag, in Ceel Afweyn district, 20 people were killed and 30 injured in clashes between clans. A curfew was imposed and troops and police officers were deployed in the area. Clashes among members of the Somali security forces, reported mainly in Mogadishu and Shabelle Hoose, also continued.

16. On 24 February, eight armed pirates attempted to hijack a Singapore-flagged tanker in the Gulf of Aden between Caluula and Yemen but were repelled by guards aboard the vessel. The vessel and crew were reported safe. That area witnessed three piracy attempts in 2017. No major incidents of civil unrest were reported during the reporting period. On 1 April, Al-Shabaab carried out vehicle-borne improvised explosive device and complex attacks at two AMISOM bases, at Mareer and Golweyn settlements in Shabelle Hoose. Four soldiers and 30 militants were killed.

C. Economic developments

17. The economy continued to grow, although not robustly enough to improve the lives of average Somalis. Key economic figures for 2017 were released during the reporting period. Real gross domestic product growth weakened to 1.8 per cent in 2017 from 2.4 per cent in 2016, following severe drought in the first half of 2017, which led to large-scale food insecurity affecting more than 6 million people.

18. The drought fuelled inflation, which rose from 1.3 per cent in 2016 to 5.2 per cent in 2017, bringing with it rises in food prices. Crop prices increased significantly, affecting household purchasing power. A steady inflow of remittances and donor finance kept the exchange rate stable in 2017 (23.605 Somali shillings to $1). The private sector could play a key role in supporting growth and creating employment, in particular for young people, which in turn could reduce insecurity. The country's business environment, however, remains structurally weak. Somalia ranked lowest in almost all key pillars of the World Bank "Doing Business" survey results published on 31 October 2017.

19. The ability of the Federal Government to implement its fiscal policy has improved significantly. Domestic revenue collection was at 103.2 per cent of the budget target for 2017. Donor grants recorded a significantly improved performance in 2017, with 85 per cent of commitments met, compared with 50 per cent in 2016. Total revenue in 2018 is projected at $274.6 million.

20. At its meeting on 21 February, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) welcomed the considerable progress made by Somalia under its staff-monitored programme and reaffirmed its commitment to help Somalia to reach a heavily indebted poor country decision point as soon as feasible. The World Bank and the Fund continue to provide the technical support needed to promote economic reform and help the Federal Government to establish a track record of improved fiscal discipline and performance, while the United Nations continues to promote political stability, reconciliation, strengthened rule of law and meaningful measures to tackle corruption. At the High-level Roundtable on Somalia, which was held on 19 April on the margins of the 2018 Spring Meetings of the World Bank and IMF, it was acknowledged that significant progress had been made, opening the path to a pre-arrears clearance grant. Progress on the economic and political fronts is critical to restoring creditor confidence ahead of an eventual decision point.

21. Growth in public expenditure kept pace with revenue, increasing by 42.9 per cent in 2017 to $243.7 million. Nonetheless, the Federal Government still faces fiscal challenges. Current spending priorities focus on the security and administrative services, which account for almost 90 per cent of total spending, crowding out provision for economic and social services.

22. Although famine was averted in 2017, it remains a looming risk throughout Somalia. The drought in 2017 resulted in crop production failures and losses in livestock and livestock-related products, estimated at $1.7 billion, between November 2016 and June 2017. The country has embarked on a medium-term and long-term strategy to address drought and famine risks based on the drought impact and needs assessment exercise conducted in January 2018.

III. Support for peacebuilding and State-building efforts

A. Establishment of a functional federal State

1. Deepening federalism

23. At the National Security Council meeting held from 6 to 10 February, the Federal Government, federal member states and the Banadir regional administration signed an interim agreement on sharing revenues collected from fishing licences. Under the agreement, the Federal Government is responsible for issuing licences for fishing 24 nautical miles or more from the coastline in the exclusive economic zone, while the federal member states issue licences for fishing within 24 nautical miles of the coastline. The agreement also provides for depositing revenue generated from the issuance of licences in a special account at the Central Bank of Somalia. The agreement was an important step towards a more comprehensive agreement on revenue generation and resource sharing, while more broadly demonstrating the mutual benefits of compromise for the Federal Government and the federal member states. In order to build on that progress, the 10-member Federal Government and federal member state technical committee established by the Council in February has prepared proposals regarding the distribution of powers between the Federal Government and federal member states, resource management and revenue sharing, which are expected to be adopted at the next meeting of the Council.

2. Constitutional review

24. On 18 January 2018, the Council of Ministers of the Federal Government endorsed a political road map for inclusive politics for the period 2017–2020. The road map contains milestones and timelines for key political processes that should be completed by 2020, paving the way for elections by universal suffrage in 2020–2021. It was adopted after a series of consultations held by the constitutionally mandated bodies with leaders of the federal member states and their regional assemblies. A draft memorandum of understanding listing the key benchmarks, milestones and expected outcomes of the constitutional review process was also drawn up.

25. A meeting bringing together representatives of the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, the National Independent Electoral Commission and the Boundaries and Federation Commission was held in Mogadishu on 22 and 23 January 2018. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to cooperating on the constitutional review process. On 22 December 2017, the Forum of the Ministries of Constitutional Affairs adopted a joint strategy for civil society engagement in the review, which identifies several avenues for the dissemination of information, public engagement and civic education. On 15 and 16 March, the Forum agreed that the national constitutional convention should be held in April. Differences between the implementing bodies over control of the budget and the division of responsibilities, however, have delayed the convention. Although intervention by the President of Somalia resulted in a memorandum of understanding clarifying the division of responsibilities, differences remain.

3. Prevention and resolution of conflicts

26. To consolidate peace and improve security in Gaalkacyo following the removal of roadblocks and normalization of traffic through the town on 16 December, a Somali national army force drawn from two divisions based in Puntland and Galmudug has been deployed to serve as a deterrent. The Gaalkacyo joint police, consisting of 200 officers drawn from both sides, has continued to perform effectively but requires additional support in terms of equipment and further training. Prominent clan elders

from north and south Gaalkacyo have formed a peace committee, under which subcommittees of women, young people and the business community have been established to give them a voice in the local peace process. UNSOM continued to work with the Federal Government, state and local governments and other partners to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting local peace initiatives.

27. During the reporting period, UNSOM continued to support efforts in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In February, the Mission, the Federal Government and the Government of Norway co-hosted a three-day colloquium on peace and reconciliation, bringing together more than 30 national and international experts, as well as government officials, United Nations personnel and representatives of the diplomatic community. The objective was to strengthen a shared understanding of conflict in Somalia and identify practical recommendations for reducing and preventing violence and promoting inclusive and sustainable peace. Input for the national reconciliation framework is being developed by the Federal Government.

28. The new Minister of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, Abdi Mohamed Sabriye, hosted a workshop on national reconciliation in Somalia on 6 and 7 March, during which he emphasized the key role of the Ministry in promoting reconciliation. He underlined the need to realign reconciliation processes with other endeavours aimed at State formation and peacebuilding and expressed his commitment to promoting inclusive and participatory reconciliation processes and strengthening existing coordination mechanisms.

29. On 16 March, the President of Somalia hosted a meeting with key stakeholders from South-West State involved in the reconciliation process to define the way forward on the inter-clan tensions in Marka, Shabelle Hoose. They held an inaugural conference in Mogadishu on 26 March, at which they formally launched the peace process for Marka. They also agreed to establish a committee to work for peace, stabilization and community development. Another conference will be held in Marka at a date to be determined. At a follow-up meeting to the meeting of 16 March, hosted on 20 March by the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and attended by political figures involved in the process, a formula was agreed upon for the representation of the Bimal, Habar Gidir and other sub-clans. Disagreement remained, however, with regard to the role of South-West State authorities in the reconciliation process.

30. On 10 and 11 January, my Special Representative for Somalia visited Hargeysa and met representatives of the "Somaliland" administration and civil society organizations following the "Somaliland" presidential election in 2017. He encouraged all parties to ensure that the parliamentary elections planned for 2019 was held on time and confirmed that the United Nations stood ready to support all parties in the process of dialogue between Somalia and "Somaliland".

4. Support for elections by universal suffrage

31. In the political road map adopted on 18 January, priorities and milestones are set forth for holding multi-party elections by universal suffrage in 2020–2021 within the broader governance framework, including the constitutional review, and for the electoral legal framework and election preparations. Under the road map, it is envisaged that the electoral law will be passed by the end of 2018. A range of options for the country's future system of representation were discussed at a technical-level meeting between representatives of the Federal Government and federal member states. In the road map, it is pointed out that there is a need to establish the modality for voter registration in 2018 and prepare for its nationwide implementation, a process that the National Independent Electoral Commission will launch in 2019.

32. Following the agreement of 5 November 2017 reached in Mogadishu by the Federal Government, federal member states and the Banadir regional administration, the Commission was requested to contact stakeholders throughout Somalia within 90 days in order to discuss the challenges involved in organizing the elections. The Commission, with the support of UNSOM, conducted extensive nationwide consultations in Banadir, Galmudug, HirShabelle, Jubaland, Puntland and South-West State and with members of the diaspora in seven locations in Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America between mid-December 2017 and mid-March 2018. The meetings, which were attended by regional officials, traditional elders, members of political parties, religious leaders and representatives of women's and youth groups and civil society organizations, showed that the Somali public appears to strongly back the idea of multi-party elections by universal suffrage for the next federal electoral cycle, in place of clan-based power-sharing arrangements.

B. Cross-cutting issues

1. Gender equality and women's empowerment

33. UNSOM has developed a strategy to achieve gender parity in the Mission by 2021. On 8 March, United Nations personnel in Somalia and other members of the international community observed International Women's Day around the country, supporting government activities to promote awareness of gender equality and women's empowerment.

34. The appointment of a gender adviser to the National Independent Electoral Commission has strengthened its capacity to pursue its agendas on gender and on women and peace and security, both within the Commission and in electoral processes.

2. Youth empowerment

35. Following the national youth conference, held in December, a nine-member interim national youth council has been established with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It includes representatives of the federal member states, young persons with disabilities and members of minority clans. On 30 January, the Federal Government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) launched the Open Innovation Challenge, seeking youth-led solutions for issues facing internally displaced persons in Somalia. On 20 and 21 February, the "Somaliland" Ministry of Youth and Sports and "Somaliland" National Youth Umbrella Organization joined in holding the Kulan Youth Summit in Hargeysa, which drew 600 youth representatives from across "Somaliland" to celebrate "Somaliland" National Youth Day. With support from UNFPA and in collaboration with the ministries of labour, social affairs and education, the Somalia Youth Peer Education Network and various youth non-governmental organizations used theatre-based techniques and participatory drama throughout the reporting period in activities to promote behavioural change with regard to gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, among more than 10,000 young people in and out of school. A new programme on youth-related advocacy efforts involving UNFPA and UN-Habitat has been in place since February 2018.

C. Development coordination

36. In January 2018, the Federal Government presented the results of the drought impact needs assessment at a high-level event in Mogadishu. In the assessment, the drivers and impact of recurrent drought are identified and long-term solutions are outlined for preventing famine as a result of drought. The ongoing humanitarian response remains essential to saving lives, but Somalia and its international partners need to develop strategies that combine sustained humanitarian response with development efforts designed to address the underlying causes of recurrent crises.

37. Underpinning the country's work on long-term recovery and resilience is its national development plan. Somalia has taken important steps to ensure that the plan has effective leadership and to coordinate its implementation. International community partners are working closely to develop and carry out initiatives to address the country's priorities. Development aid continues to increase in Somalia, which received $742 million in 2017.

IV. Comprehensive approach to security

A. International coordination

38. As agreed at the conference on security held in Mogadishu on 5 December 2017, the Federal Government and international partners collaborated on the development of a comprehensive transition plan to assist Somali security institutions in fully assuming their responsibilities. The plan includes provision for: operational activities; institutional development; support for activities relating to stabilization and the prevention and countering of violent extremism; priority geographical areas where transition can be accelerated; and the supporting role to be played by international partners, including the African Union, the European Union and the United States. UNSOM and UNSOS facilitated this collaboration, including by means of information-gathering visits to the federal member states. Key meetings between the Federal Government and international partners held during the reporting period, including on 15 January, 31 January and 11 March, have focused on the transition plan.

B. Comprehensive approach to security strands

Strand 1
Enabling the operations of the African Union Mission in Somalia and enhancing its effectiveness

39. Further progress on strand 1 has yet to materialize. It is expected, however, that the impending work on a conditional transfer of responsibility for security to the Somali security forces will lead to closer cooperation between international partners, institutions of the Federal Government and the federal member states on coordinating support for planned AMISOM operations and efforts to enhance the Mission's effectiveness.

40. As at 1 January, UNSOS was supporting up to 21,626 uniformed AMISOM personnel in accordance with resolution 2372 (2017). Between 26 March and 17 April, AMISOM, aided by UNSOS, deployed a formed police unit of 150 personnel from Sierra Leone to Kismaayo. In addition, UNSOS continued to provide non-lethal support to the 10,900 Somali troops in 20 locations who are in joint operations with AMISOM, as authorized by the Security Council.

41. Because Al-Shabaab controls the Leego forward operating base on the Mogadishu-Baidoa main supply route, UNSOS continued to supply AMISOM and the Somali army in sector 3 by air. UNSOS contracted an additional rotary-wing helicopter from January 2018 to augment its capacity. In January, it began delivering rations to AMISOM troops in Baraawe by sea, pending reconstruction of the local airstrip by the European Union.

42. On 2 March, AMISOM troop-contributing countries attended a summit in Kampala, under the auspices of the President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, in his capacity as their spokesperson. In their communiqué, they urged the Security Council to reconsider its decision to draw down AMISOM, stating that the troop reductions and time frame under resolution 2372 (2017) were not realistic and would lead to a reversal of the gains made by AMISOM, and requested that previous troop levels be restored to account for the inadequate capacity of the national army. Troop-contributing countries also called upon the United Nations to provide adequate, predictable and sustainable funding from United Nations-assessed contributions to facilitate the implementation by AMISOM of its mandate, including through the provision of the requisite force enablers and multipliers. The troop-contributing countries also requested the African Union and AMISOM leadership, as well as the Federal Government, to submit a realistic transition plan for consideration at the following summit of the troop-contributing countries.

43. The Mine Action Service of the United Nations trained more than 3,000 AMISOM troops during the reporting period in improvised explosive device search capacity and threat mitigation and explosive ordnance disposal. It supported AMISOM in the task of protecting key infrastructure by providing 34 dogs to 17 explosive detection dog teams. The Service also established a threat mitigation cell to improve the coordination of explosive hazard mitigation efforts by AMISOM, the Federal Government, federal member states, the Somali security forces and international partners. On 22 January, the AMISOM Force Commander and the Service launched a training booklet on mitigating the threat of improvised explosive devices, for use by AMISOM troops and police. The booklet, which is available in Amharic, English, French and Somali, contains detailed information about the types of improvised explosive devices and on search training programmes offered by the Service.

44. Kenya joined Ethiopia, Nigeria and Uganda in signing the tripartite memorandum of understanding for the reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment and self-sustainment. The conclusion of the tripartite memorandum with Burundi was initiated and Djibouti has indicated willingness to sign once it finalizes negotiations with the African Union and the United Nations. Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have lodged claims for reimbursement for equipment lost in hostile action in Somalia. Djibouti deployed additional contingent-owned equipment in January 2018, based on the provisions of the tripartite memorandum of understanding.

45. Since my previous report, the Somali national army trust fund has received $475,645, $347,251 and $4,997,160 from Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom respectively, bringing its current balance to $7,326,728, which can sustain the army approximately until August 2018. The AMISOM trust fund, however, has not received new contributions and currently has an uncommitted balance of $1.8 million.

Strand 2
Strengthening Somali security institutions

46. Strand 2 work continued mainly at the expert level, focusing on support for the national army (strand 2a), the police (strand 2b) and the justice and corrections sector (strand 2c).

47. The decision by the National Security Council at its meeting held between 6 and 10 February to integrate regional forces, such as Darwish, into Somali security institutions will require strong support for policing structures to ensure integration, training and vetting.

48. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the operational readiness assessment of 2017 continued. Differences of opinion between the Ministry of Defence and the incoming national army leadership have delayed the endorsement of a new army structure but there has been progress in integrating 2,400 members of the Puntland defence forces into the national army. UNSOM and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) supported human rights training for those soldiers and their biometric registration during the reporting period. They also supported screening for children, which has resulted in the identification of 17 children among the 2,037 soldiers screened thus far. The registration of the remaining 363 soldiers started on 1 April.

49. As the development of the Somalia federal police plan began, UNSOM provided strategic advice to the joint technical committee created to coordinate the implementation of the new policing model at the state and federal levels. Based on the state police plans developed by each federal member state, the Joint Technical Committee identified a series of policing priorities for 2018, which were subsequently endorsed by the Council of Police Commissioners in February. Donors pledged contributions through the newly established joint police programme to support the implementation of those priorities. On 26 March, UNSOM facilitated a high-level conference held in Hargeysa to develop a phased plan to reform the "Somaliland" police. The meeting followed a similar conference on the justice and corrections sector in January, which demonstrated the commitment of the new administration to working with the United Nations to strengthen all parts of the justice chain in "Somaliland".

50. On 24 January, the Federal Minister of Justice and the five state ministers of justice signed a political agreement on a justice and corrections model for Somalia. Some technical aspects of the agreement are still being worked out at the federal level and state implementation plans are being developed. Meanwhile, initiatives to prevent violent extremism have continued through the joint rule of law programme, including the completion of phase one (one courtroom and one prison block) of the Mogadishu prison and court complex for the trial and detention in the civilian justice system of persons in high-risk cases relating to Al-Shabaab. Phase two of the rehabilitation project for high-risk prisoners in Baidoa is expected to be completed by 30 April.

51. The Mine Action Service helped the Somalia Explosive Management Authority to finalize a multi-year national mine action plan, which was launched on 15 February during the twenty-first International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers in Geneva. The strategy focuses on protection, youth employment, job skills and stability. Moreover, the Service continued to train and equip the federal and state police forces in explosive ordnance disposal. Teams trained by the Service safely destroyed 158 items of explosive remnants of war and conducted post-blast investigations at 28 sites where improvised explosive devices had been deployed.

52. During the reporting period, the Mine Action Service deployed community liaison officers to 41 recovered districts across the southern and central regions to deliver risk education messages to local communities about explosive hazards and to promote group discussions on the root causes of violent extremism, which could help with the design of mitigation responses. The liaison officers facilitated 250 group discussion sessions, attended by 3,038 individuals of different backgrounds, 64 per

cent of them male and 36 per cent female. Participants indicated that unemployment and lack of education were the two driving factors leading to violent extremism.

53. To help to build community confidence at the district level the Somalia Stability Fund continued to support initiatives covering community infrastructure and the rehabilitation of government facilities in Adale, Baardheere, Kismaayo and Mahadday Weym, local-level reconciliation efforts in Gaalkacyo and a gendered district analysis for Buulobarde. The Mine Action Service continued to promote stabilization activities at the community level through the clearance of hazardous material affecting 59 communities. Moreover, 160 assessments of non-functional public infrastructure were conducted and the results shared with community resilience and recovery partners for the safe conduct of operations.

Strand 3
Stabilization, community recovery and extension of State authority

54. At a stabilization forum held on 29 March and involving federal and state officials and international partners, the importance of stabilization within the overall security transition was highlighted, as was the role of the states in enhancing the implementation of related initiatives. Led by the federal member state ministries of the interior, workshops were held in February (Galmudug, Jubaland, South-West State) and March (HirShabelle) to develop state stabilization plans, as envisaged in the security pact. Following the reconciliation workshop held for the Abgal and the Shiidle clans, the Balcad district authorities selected a core facilitation team consisting of government and community representatives that will identify priorities.

Strand 4
Preventing and countering violent extremism

55. UNSOM continued to support the Federal Government in implementing its national strategy for preventing and countering violent extremism. The new, revised strategy has been translated into Somali and received Cabinet endorsement. At the federal level, a coordination office for preventing and countering violent extremism has been set up in the Office of the Prime Minister and a federal coordinator has been appointed. The federal ministries and federal member states, supported by UNSOM, also developed local action plans, in which priority needs are identified and local solutions designed to prevent recruitment and radicalization are canvassed.

56. UNSOM continued to support the Federal Government's defectors rehabilitation programme by facilitating coordination with partners and donors and providing technical support in developing standard operating procedures for the reception, screening and reintegration of defectors. Three rehabilitation centres for male defectors are operational in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Kismaayo. As at April, they were supporting 83, 197 and 119 defectors, respectively.

C. Transition planning

57. Since 4 December, the Federal Government has led a planning process for the transfer of responsibility for security to the Somali authorities focusing on four areas: the operational handover of locations from AMISOM to the Somali security forces; institutional capacity-building; the implementation of the national security architecture; and the alignment of supporting activities, such as initiatives regarding stabilization, local governance and preventing and countering violent extremism, with locations to be handed over by AMISOM. The drafting group for the plan visited all the federal member states to obtain input. Subsequently, the National Security Adviser circulated an initial draft of a transition plan, which was welcomed by international

partners on 11 March. The implementation of the plan will be steered by a team led by the Federal Government, in collaboration with the federal member states and international partners, and using technical input from the comprehensive approach to security strands.

V. Human rights and protection

A. Human rights

58. Violations of the right to freedom of expression continued in the reporting period, with six arbitrary arrests and the conviction of two journalists arrested in "Somaliland", whose sentences were later commuted to fines. One media outlet was closed and restrictions were placed on reporting. Civilian casualties decreased in the reporting period but Al-Shabaab reportedly carried out more than 100 abductions. Prolonged detention without judicial review, mostly of suspected Al-Shabaab members, continues to occur in Puntland.

59. One civilian was injured in an air strike by unidentified aircraft in Juba Hoose and another was killed by AMISOM in Hiraan. One prisoner died while in custody in the central prison in Mogadishu. Two women were sexually assaulted and two others injured by police at a camp for internally displaced persons in Puntland. Three death sentences were pronounced and one person on death row was released, after being pardoned by the victim's family.

B. Compliance with the human rights due diligence policy

60. Cascade briefings on human rights were delivered to members of the Puntland defence forces identified for integration into the national army. Such briefings constitute one of the measures identified in the framework of the human rights due diligence policy risk assessment. UNSOM and UNOPS sought confirmation from Puntland military officials that only trained troops would be considered for integration and assurances that the 91 soldiers selected but not yet trained would receive human rights training. The AMISOM-UNSOM-UNSOS technical working group set up to implement the human rights due diligence policy resumed its monthly meetings and discussed options for stepping up efforts with regard to accountability for violations, including the proposal that AMISOM respond to allegation letters within 90 days.

C. Children in armed conflict

61. During the reporting period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting mechanism verified 1,349 cases of grave violations affecting 999 children, 173 of whom were girls. The violations included 550 abductions, 448 cases of recruitment, 72 cases of sexual violence, 99 killings and 26 cases of children injured by armed forces and groups. Two hospitals were looted, 43 schools were attacked and there were seven incidents of denial of humanitarian aid.

62. On 19 January, 36 children were rescued from Al-Shabaab by Somali national army special forces in Shabelle Dhexe. Six required medical treatment and were hospitalized and the others were taken to a reintegration centre supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Mogadishu.

D. Prevention of sexual violence

63. The United Nations continued to receive reports from around the country of sexual violence, generally affecting women and girls living in settlements for internally displaced persons. The eviction of more than 3,000 families in Mogadishu on 29 and 30 December contributed to the deterioration of the already-weak protective environment for internally displaced persons. UNFPA, working with the gender-based violence subcluster, mobilized 70 health workers and psychosocial counsellors to provide services and information to survivors of gender-based violence. The subcluster provided 2,257 girls, 7,886 boys, 32,015 women and 6,815 men with information and training to boost their capacity to prevent gender-based violence.

VI. Humanitarian situation

64. A massive scale-up of famine prevention efforts and better-than-expected *deyr* season (September to November) rains in 2017 helped to reduce the risk of famine, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Some 5.4 million people, down from a peak of 6.2 million, are still in need of assistance, while the number of people in urgent need of life-saving assistance has dropped from 3.2 million to 2.7 million. Half a million people are in integrated phase classification 4 ("Emergency"). More than half of those in need are children. Malnutrition rates are at serious levels and among the highest in the world. Overall, 1.2 million children could be malnourished by the end of 2018. With continuing drought conditions, the situation remains extremely fragile and far from returning to levels prior to the crisis in 2017. Without timely action, the threat of famine could rapidly reappear, especially with the current forecast of average to below-average rainfall during the *gu* rainy season (April to June). Some 2.1 million people are now internally displaced, including 1 million newly displaced in 2017. Most of them largely depend on aid because they have lost their means of livelihood.

65. Evictions continued, in particular in Mogadishu and Baidoa. In February, 2,820 internally displaced persons were forcibly removed in Baidoa. Overall, 200,280 individuals were evicted in 2017, 154,000 (77 per cent) of them in Mogadishu, which hosts nearly 626,000 internally displaced persons. The mass eviction that took place on 29 and 30 December 2017 accounted for 23 per cent of the year's total and was the worst single incident of mass eviction in 2017. Humanitarian workers continue to engage with the authorities to seek long-term solutions. On 8 February, the Mayor of Mogadishu announced the establishment of a temporary five-member commission, chaired by the Deputy Governor of Banadir, to investigate the evictions.

66. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Under-Secretary-General, Administrator of UNDP visited Somalia on 30 and 31 January to highlight the seriousness of the humanitarian situation and the new approach to addressing it. They launched the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia and the resilience and recovery framework, which outline areas in which humanitarian and development partners will collaborate with the Federal Government to help to break the cycle of vulnerability and need by 2022. Under the Plan, $1.5 billion is called for to sustain famine prevention efforts in 2018. At the time of reporting, $369.2 million in humanitarian assistance had been received (of which $228.8 million is allocated for the Plan).

67. Humanitarian agencies continue to encounter difficulties on most roads in southern and central Somalia and in some parts of Bari and the disputed Sool region in the north, mainly because of insecurity, illegal checkpoints and extortion. State

authorities conducted operations to remove unauthorized checkpoints but armed actors responded by shifting to non-static checkpoints. Al-Shabaab roadblocks in parts of HirShabelle, Jubaland and South-West State continued to constrain the passage of relief supplies and essential commercial goods, thereby driving up costs. In some locations, such as Diinsoor and Waajid in South-West State, Garbahaarrey in Jubaland and Buulobarde in HirShabelle, humanitarian organizations remain forced by the roadblocks to airlift assistance instead of using more affordable and sustainable ground transportation. The authorities of South-West State have agreed to establish a single registration and taxation point for humanitarian agencies.

VII. United Nations presence in Somalia

68. United Nations entities continue to be present in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Boosaaso, Dhooble, Doolow, Gaalkacyo, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Kismaayo, and Mogadishu. UNSOM and UNSOS conducted assessment missions in Dhuusamarreeb and a suitable location for a United Nations office has been identified in Galmudug. As at 18 March, 559 international and 1,196 national personnel were deployed throughout Somalia. UNSOM is developing proposals on how to better deliver as one United Nations and reconfigure the relevant components to enable them to provide effective support for the implementation of the comprehensive approach to security, the national security architecture and the transition plan.

69. The United Nations has embarked on a programme criticality exercise in 2018, which will inform a review of the Organization's footprint in Somalia.

70. In January 2018, a Mogadishu security enhancement plan was adopted by the United Nations and the Federal Government, both of which appointed focal points to ensure maximum security at the international airport. The plan, which would be funded partly by the United Nations and international partners, consists of five layers of security involving all actors concerned with the area's security.

71. The United Nations continues to implement recommended risk mitigation measures to improve safety and security for all United Nations personnel throughout Somalia, including in the Mogadishu international airport area. Between late December 2017 and April 2018, United Nations system crisis management exercises were conducted in two regional offices, Beledweyne and Kismaayo, with the participation of AMISOM.

VIII. Observations

72. Despite the perennial political crises arising from the challenges associated with managing clan politics and relations between state institutions, and from the structural flaws and shortcomings within those fledgling institutions, Somalia continues to make progress towards building a functional State. I pay tribute to the leadership of the Federal Government and the federal member states for their continued commitment to constructive cooperation in peacebuilding and State-building.

73. Further progress in defining the Somali federal model, including by formalizing the status of federal member states and the agreements between them and the Federal Government on the division of responsibilities and powers and the sharing of resources and revenues, would help to stabilize the political environment. In advancing this agenda, I urge all parties to abstain from the use of violence to achieve political goals and to respect the provisional federal constitution and the rule of law. That is critical for the development of a truly federal Somalia.

74. I am very concerned about the implications of the recurring political crises in the Federal Parliament, including the latest, which has impeded progress on critical legislation. I urge all political actors to put the interests of Somalia and its people first. Further delays and political instability could risk rolling back hard-earned achievements.

75. I reiterate my call upon Member States to shield it from their political differences, particularly considering the continued fragility of that country and the need for unity among its people and leaders to put it on the path of sustainable peace and development.

76. The development of a national reconciliation framework, which is supported by my Special Representative and international partners, is critical for State-building. I am pleased to note the progress made in conflict resolution in Gaalkacyo and the launch of the Marka reconciliation process in Mogadishu. I urge the federal and regional authorities to prioritize dialogue and inclusive processes to resolve their differences at the local level and to foster local, regional and national reconciliation. I also urge that a conflict prevention and reconciliation approach be adopted in defining key processes, including the constitutional review, the electoral model and security sector reform.

77. I welcome the progress made towards preparations for multi-party elections by universal suffrage in 2020–2021, which would move Somalia beyond exclusively clan-based power-sharing arrangements. I commend the National Independent Electoral Commission on its recent nationwide consultations to identify challenges in organizing those elections. I encourage stakeholders to make swift progress on the choice of the electoral model and finalization of the electoral legal framework in a transparent, inclusive and accountable manner. I also encourage the Commission to consider the relevant voter registration options and to select a modality that is applicable and suitable for achieving inclusive and sustainable nationwide voter registration that ensures the voting rights of all Somalis.

78. Federal and federal member state leaders are showing commitment to improving security and accelerating security sector reform. I commend President of Somalia for his ongoing personal engagement in reforming the national army. Those efforts should continue within the framework of the national security architecture and the transition plan and be based on the comprehensive approach to security.

79. Al-Shabaab has demonstrated its ability to execute deadly terrorist attacks in Mogadishu and to engage Somali security forces and AMISOM. Suicide bombings and targeted assassinations in Mogadishu and other localities continue, claiming the lives of innocent civilians, including children, and maiming many others. The twin suicide car bombings of 23 February, which killed more than 40 people in Mogadishu, are a stark reminder of the threat. I encourage the Federal Government and international partners to develop a coherent approach to mitigating the threat posed by improvised explosive devices.

80. In that regard, I pay tribute to AMISOM and the Somali security forces, which have thwarted most of the attacks and continue to preserve political gains, thereby protecting space for further progress. The sacrifices that they continue to make, under very difficult conditions, should not be in vain and should inspire all Somali leaders at the national and regional levels to make the required progress.

81. I welcome the leadership of the Federal Government in developing a transition plan to assume full responsibility for security. Continued close cooperation with the federal member states, the African Union, troop-contributing countries and the security partners of Somalia will be key. I urge all contributors to the country's security, whether operational, financial or political, to align their efforts with the priorities set forth in the plan and to coordinate their support for the country's security sector to ensure a coherent approach and make sure that combined efforts result in stronger outcomes.

82. Progress must continue in implementing the rule of law. That includes the full implementation of the state police plans through the joint police project I welcome the political agreement on the justice and corrections model and call upon the Federal Government to expedite the model's implementation and to rapidly complete its justice and correction plans and thereby increase the provision of basic justice services to the local population. Linking justice and correction plans to those for the state police would ensure a comprehensive approach to the rule of law at the federal member state level. The integration of regional forces, such as Darwish, into the state police and the national army, in accordance with the national security architecture and new policing model, is an important step in the transition process. The support of the United Nations for strengthening law enforcement at the state level is part of a criminal justice approach linking human rights, gender and access to justice, and an integral part of countering violent extremism. It is also a recognition that a focus on military responses will not be sufficient to deal with the lack of security in Somalia. I urge the strengthening of the regional security architecture, including the regional security councils and regional security offices, and the timely completion of the regional operational readiness assessment so as to obtain a clear picture regarding the number, capacity and capabilities of those forces.

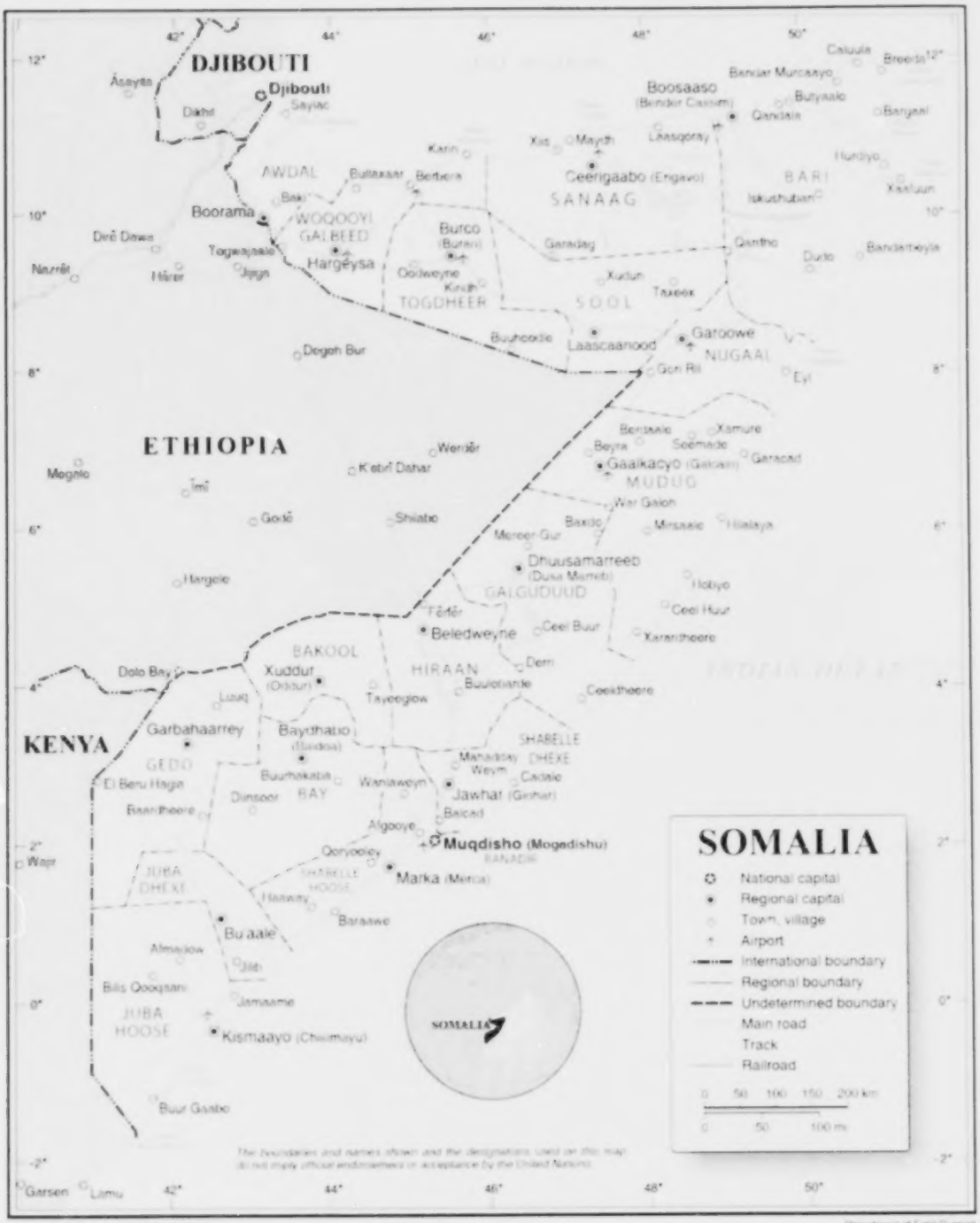
83. I am pleased to see some improvement in the humanitarian situation, largely owing to humanitarian aid. However, the needs remain great. Some 500,000 people are in a humanitarian emergency situation, which may swiftly reach a catastrophic level if aid is not sustained at the level of 2017. Sufficient funding is needed up front to avert famine. I am grateful to donors that have signalled their commitments for continued support but concerned about delays in the fulfilment of commitments and the risk of an overall decrease in contributions. Frontloading sufficient funds early in the year will be critical to keeping the situation from deteriorating further in the second quarter of 2018.

84. I remain concerned about the continued abduction of children and the use of child soldiers in the conflict. That 36 children were rescued by Somali special forces in Shabelle Dhexe in January and ultimately transferred to a rehabilitation centre in Mogadishu was a source of great comfort. I call upon all parties to take measures to mitigate the impact on child soldiers when conducting military operations.

85. I also remain concerned about the long prison sentences handed down by the military that remain in place against 40 children in a UNICEF-supported reintegration centre in Garoowe, Puntland, because of their alleged association with Al-Shabaab. I call upon the President of Puntland to grant a presidential pardon, accelerate the children's transfer to UNICEF-supported reintegration centres closer to their areas of origin and direct military authorities to transfer future criminal investigations against civilians, in particular children, to the civilian jurisdiction.

86. Despite the gains made in 2016 with the election of women to 24 per cent of seats in the Federal Parliament, the political participation of women and their role in decision-making remain modest. I am concerned about the inadequate support extended to the women parliamentarians and their exclusion from and poor representation in key decision-making processes. Failure to address this matter could have an adverse effect on the role and representation of women in the 2020–2021 elections. I call upon the Federal Government, the Federal Parliament, civil society and the international community to strengthen collective efforts to support the agenda of women parliamentarians and promote their role in the Federal Parliament and in advancing peace and stability in Somalia.

87. I pay tribute to my Special Representative, Michael Keating, my two Deputy Special Representatives and the staff of UNSOM, the head and staff of UNSOS, and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Somalia for their continued hard work in challenging conditions.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